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Thus, not only can the supernatural fears of pupils extinguish, but so also can the fears of the teachers become reduced in the same way, so that they no longer maintain these beliefs by sanctioning them.

The fact that Kwoma children can learn not to heed, and Kwoma parents to stop issuing and sanctioning unrealistic warnings, raises a serious question. Why does this not occur more frequently? Why, in the course of time, have not all these supernatural beliefs disappeared as a result of this process? The answer to this is suggested by one of the basic postulates of the functional theory of anthropology. Parents continue to issue unrealistic warnings and to sanction them because they form an integral part of one or more systems of beliefs, customs, and organized activities which, as a whole, satisfy a social need.[14]

The belief in *marsalai* forms a large part of the charter[15] of the yam cult.[16] *Marsalai* are believed to be present whenever this cult holds a ceremonial meeting and to bless those who participate. In playing the instruments of the cult, the members are producing a representation of the voices of these beings. After a ceremony, no man who has attended may have intercourse with his wife, because the powerful and dangerous influence of the cult *marsalai* still clings to him, and might injure her. Thus, were the belief in these monsters to disappear, the Kwoma would be forced either to provide a new *raison d'être* for their cult ceremonies or to give them up altogether. It is not necessary here to present a detailed account of the functions of the cult, but a few of them may be mentioned to show how important this institution is in Kwoma society. The most direct function of the cult seems

[14] See B. Malinowski, "The Scientific Basis of Applied Anthropology," *Reale Academia D'Italia*, XVIII (1940), 22.

[15] Every institution consists in part of the traditional purposes and reasons for its existence which are believed by the members of the personnel. Malinowski has called this the charter. See B. Malinowski, "The Group and the Individual in Functional Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIV (1939), 932-954.

[16] The personnel, norms, and material apparatus of this institution can be gathered from the descriptive chapters. The charter and functions are stressed here because of their importance in this context.

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to be that it provides a means of artistic expression. Cult ceremonies furnish the chief opportunity for singing, dancing, rhythmic gong beating, flute playing, and the manufacture of carved figures. Numerous important integrative functions are also fulfilled by the yam cult. It provides one of the bases for the social stratification of men, differentiating four prestige positions: boys who do not belong to the cult, members of the first stage, members of the second stage, and members of the final stage. The yam cult is closely integrated with head-hunting, in that only those who have taken a head can become members of the highest stage. The yam cult excludes women and thus helps to define their status and to maintain the division of labor by sex. Through such exclusion it provides a socially accepted means for men to express their aggressive feelings toward women. It also provides an opportunity for ceremonial license. Finally, the yam cult is associated with agriculture. The cult is thus an important institution, closely integrated into Kwoma culture, and to tamper with its charter by refusing to believe in *marsalai* is something which no pupil or teacher could lightly do.

Beliefs in *marsalai*, in addition to forming part of the charter of the yam cult, provide an explanation for cosmic events and a means of controlling them. Bad rain and wind storms, earthquakes, and rainbows[17] are thought to be produced by these monsters. These beliefs permit a Kwoma to perform certain practices which are thought to control them. In the first place he can avoid disturbing them, and in the second place he can utter an aggressive prayer which he believes will stop the storm or earthquake.[18] Thus, both because beliefs in *marsalai* form an integral part of the yam cult and because they perform other functions as well, Kwoma teachers would be very loath to cease believing in them, even if events made them skeptical of their supposed powers.

[17] Wind storms and earthquakes not infrequently destroy Kwoma dwellings and are thus seriously dangerous.

[18] It is assumed here that any activity in the face of danger is normally more reinforcing than passive acceptance, even though this activity is not effective in averting danger.

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Kwoma beliefs about ghosts form part of the charter of the funeral cult. Whenever a person is on the point of death, ghosts are believed to hover around in order to carry the soul to the land of the dead. After death they are believed to guard the body during the months that it is exposed on a platform, until the time when the bones are finally buried under the floor of the dwelling and distributed to the relatives and *friends*. The funeral cult functions directly to provide a means of expressing grief. It is at the first funeral ceremony, which begins when the person dies and ends after the corpse has been deposited on the platform, that the female relatives wail, and that the male relatives talk emotionally of their friendship with the deceased and express their hatred of those responsible for his death.[19] Second, this institution provides an opportunity for mourning. Relatives of the deceased daub themselves with mud and deny themselves some article of diet. Finally, the funeral cult provides for the disposal of the corpse, and thus functions to prevent sickness from contagion. The cult also has integrative functions in that it supports the relationship between relatives and *friends* through the distribution of the bones of the deceased at the time of the second funeral. The second funeral also provides an opportunity for a meeting of the members of the yam cult. Thus, were Kwoma teachers to allow pupils to disbelieve in ghosts, a new rationale would have to be discovered for the funeral cult or its functions would have to be taken over by some other institution.

Besides furnishing a reason for funeral practices, the belief in ghosts provides an explanation for strange noises at night and for dreams, and thus affords a rationale for action. When a Kwoma hears a strange noise at night, he rushes into the nearest house, closes the door, and shouts imprecations and curses at the ghosts, commanding them to return to the land of the dead. He often beats the air with sticks to strengthen his commands. If he has a nightmare he resorts to similar practices; the women may wail and beg the

[19] All deaths are believed to be caused by sorcery.

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775 ghost to leave and not to take the soul of the one who has had
121 the nightmare. The belief in ghosts also offers an explana-
182 tion for irrational acts, e.g., fits of unexpected anger ex-
pressed toward members of the in-group. When such occur,
121 the blame can be transferred to a ghost by means of the
182 theory of ghost possession, thus preventing retaliatory meas-
787 ures which would tend to disrupt the group. Ghost possession
775 also provides a means of group catharsis of guilt and of so-
cial control. A ghost is believed to possess a person in order
to express his anger at a living relative (usually not the pos-
sessed person himself) for some sin which he is committing.
In order to make the ghost return to the land of the dead, the
proper sin must be confessed by an exorcist as spokesman
for the group. The exorcist, a relative of the possessed per-
son, lists the sins of the community one by one until the ghost
indicates the reason for his anger by means of an affirmation
from the possessed person. The sinner then promises to mend
his ways, and the ghost returns to the land of the dead. Thus,
exorcising the ghost is a group confession of sins and a
means of exerting social control. The belief in the existence
of ghosts thus fulfills a variety of functions at Kwoma and
can therefore be expected to show a strong resistance to ex-
tinction.

754 A large part of Kwoma medical practice derives from be-
755 liefs in sorcery. Whenever anyone becomes seriously ill, his
121 relatives announce this event on their house tamberan gongs
182 and command everyone in the tribe to stop sorcery. If the
[202] person continues to be sick, they call a sorcery court, at
which accusations are made and denied and evidence is pre-
sented. Finally, the relatives of the sick person may visit all
those whom they suspect of sorcery and make them drink
water as a test. Belief in sorcery thus offers an explanation
for sickness which allows for coöperative curing efforts, and
is thereby of considerable functional importance to those who
have no better theory of disease and no more effective meth-
ods of cure. A secondary function of this type of medical
practice is that it offers, in the procedures against the sup-
posed sorcerer, a formalized method of expressing aggres-

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sion[20] which is normally harmless because the sorcerer is seldom if ever discovered.

The belief in sorcery, as well as furnishing an explanation for sickness, functions as a means of social control. It stands, indeed, in lieu of a police force and strong political organization as a preventive of criminal behavior. Theft, rape, murder, and trespass, for example, are inhibited by the fear that these crimes will bring retaliation through sorcery from the person against whom the crime is committed or from his relatives. The fear of sorcery is more potent in preventing crimes than the fear of other forms of retaliation because it is considered as dangerous as realistic modes and more difficult to prevent.

Finally, sorcery provides a means whereby persons can express their aggression against other members of the society without serious consequences. Although the Kwoma probably use this mode of expressing anger only infrequently, the belief in the efficacy of the sorcery mechanism permits one to perform acts which he believes will cause the sickness and death of another person. Thus sorcery beliefs, like those about *marsalai* and ghosts, perform important functions for the members of Kwoma society.

Kwoma informants explain that it is necessary to hold the age-grade ceremony once every five years in order to provide an opportunity for the ceremonial letting of blood that insures health and normal growth to the initiates. The beliefs about blood are thus bound into the system of age-grading, which provides a hierarchy of prestige positions and, like the yam cult, provides opportunities for singing, dancing, flute playing, gong beating, wood carving, and ceremonial license. The taboo against eating pork that one has speared, which is based on the Kwoma theory of blood, prevents private consumption by the hunter and compels him to distribute the meat. This results in quick consumption, an important factor in a damp hot climate where no efficient method for preserving meat is known. The distribution of pork to rela-

[20] The announcement of sickness, the behavior at court, and the testing visits are all aggressive in character.

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121 82 182 602 262 582 The distribution of pork to relatives also serves to cement kinship bonds. The belief that a person should not eat yams which he has planted, because of blood contamination, results in exchange planting and thus strengthens the coöperative bonds between relatives. Finally, the beliefs in blood strengthen the rules of incest and exogamy, since it is thought that children of parents with the same blood are not likely to be strong and healthy.

869 121 182 Kwoma beliefs about *marsalai*, ghosts, sorcery, and blood are thus seen to be not isolated unrealistic fears, but theories which are enmeshed and intertwined with many of the important institutions of the culture.[21] It is consequently understandable that a Kwoma teacher should insist that a pupil learn these beliefs and that he should tend to disregard evidence that they are unrealistic. The pupil, too, experiences many of the advantages which these beliefs entail, a fact which aids the teacher in the task of inculcation.

121 172 178 Although the above analysis gives an answer to the question of why these unrealistic fears do not extinguish, it raises an equally serious one: How can such fears ever extinguish? In other words, if culture is integrated and functional, how can social change ever take place? The case of Gwiyap and Mar suggests one possible answer to this question. The belief that sago washed by women is not good to eat has the function of making Kwoma men do their share of the work of extracting sago flour. In other words, it supports an equitable division of labor in this phase of Kwoma economic life. The presence of the ethnographer, introducing trade goods which were highly prized by Gwiyap and Mar, their *sisters*, and their parents, introduced a disturbing element into this adjustment. Mar and Gwiyap were willing to take the chance of becoming sick, their *sisters* were willing to do more work, and their parents were willing to let the customary division [123] of labor lapse in order to obtain these trade goods. Without intention, or even awareness of the event until after its occurrence, the ethnographer, by introducing a new form of wealth

[21] Supernatural beliefs, on a cultural level, are similar to neurotic symptoms in the individual, in that both are based on unrealistic fear, both result in secondary gains, and both resist extinction.

794 partly by the fact that membership in the two cults is maintained at an [241] approximate equality. These cults are connected with yams in that the cults are thought to be essential to the growth of these vegetables, and [534] they are held two yam plantings apart. The second stage is the nokwi which [241] introduces mysteries of the water drum to its members. This is also connected with yams in that the young men are initiated into this only after they have planted their first yams--itself a sacred rite.

754 Black magic is constantly being practiced and everyone in the culture is always careful of food leavings and blood which are the two most important [182] materials for the hands of the operator. This belief is very strongly [154] integrated in the culture and seems to function in the expression of aggressions and to offer a readymade explanation of neurotic anxiety.

775 The dfad dwell on the top of a nearby mountain in a topsyturvy existence. These ghosts chase and frighten people at night but do not kill them. They sometimes take the form of a bird or animal in the day time. In particular they hover around a dead man, for their job is to escort him [764] to the land of the dead. (There is a double funeral, first an exposure [765] on platform and secondly, burial of bones beneath floor of the house.)

776 There are other types of supernatural creatures who dwell in rocks, waterholes, etc., in the guise of snakes. They cause wind, rain, thunder, lightening and the rainbow, and are dangerous to man in that if they are disturbed they will shoot him with a sago needle which is painful but not [794] fatal. These beings are associated with the men's cult. The uninitiated are told that the esoteria are made and operated by these creatures.

. . . . . .

128 This is the bare outline of the culture in itself incomplete. Some of the interetices and interrelations we have the information to fill in and others we have not.